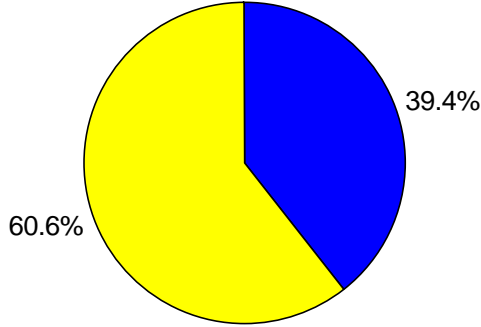


## 13-01-General Public Information

Fund/Agency: 001/13	Office of Public Affairs	
Personnel Services	\$215,701	<b>CAPS Percentage of Agency Total</b>  <b>General Public Information</b> <b>All Other Agency CAPS</b>
Operating Expenses	\$165,000	
Recovered Costs	(\$45,100)	
Capital Equipment	\$0	
<b>Total CAPS Cost:</b>	<b>\$335,601</b>	
Federal Revenue	\$0	
State Revenue	\$0	
User Fee Revenue	\$0	
Other Revenue	\$0	
<b>Total Revenue:</b>	<b>\$0</b>	
<b>Net CAPS Cost:</b>	<b>\$335,601</b>	
Positions/SYE involved in the delivery of this CAPS	4/3.65	

### ► CAPS Summary

As the information connection to County government, the Office of Public Affairs (OPA) provides essential information to County citizens, businesses and visitors concerning County government actions, programs and services. Citizens perceive OPA as the central communications office for the County and look to the agency to provide timely and accurate information. The agency uses a variety of media to communicate with citizens and emphasizes the use of current technology. For example, citizens have 24 hour access to County information through the Web site and 324-INFO. Such efforts provide "one-stop shopping" for our customers.

## *Office of Public Affairs*

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### **324-INFO**

Coordinates and manages content of the 24-hour automated telephone system, which provides taped information on more than 100 County government subjects.

### **Brochure Inventory at Information Desk**

Maintains inventory of over 100 brochures, newsletters, public transportation schedules, flyers, employment applications and job bulletins, etc. provided by County agencies for distribution to citizens.

### **Cable Channel 16 Bulletin Board Messages**

Reviews, edits and formats approximately 550 messages annually for broadcast on the Fairfax County Cable Channel 16 Bulletin Board in an effort to widely disseminate County information.

### **Citizen Focus Groups**

Conducts focus groups to assess citizen opinion on communication issues. Focus groups were held in FY 2001 to gather input for the Web site redesign and to assess County publications.

### **Citizen Handbook**

Researches, updates, edits and publishes a comprehensive Citizen Handbook about government programs and services in hard copy and electronically on the County Web site. The Handbook is sent to libraries, community associations, County agencies and elected officials for dissemination and is provided to citizens and businesses upon request.

### **Communication Audit**

Conducts periodic audits to evaluate the effectiveness of the Office of Public Affairs' (OPA) communication programs. The audits include analyzing County publications for image, factual and message consistency; relevance to mission and readability; interviewing key County staff members; benchmarking other local government communications; and conducting citizen surveys.

### **Customer Assistance**

Provides essential services to both internal and external customers. The agency's response to inquiries often forms the first impression a citizen receives of the County, so it is imperative that our staff is helpful, considerate and well informed. By the same token, County employees also know they can call the agency to get assistance on answering any questions they may have regarding the County and its services. The agency operates the central citizen information desk to provide essential customer service to more than 800 constituents on a daily basis. Staff answers both the 703-324-3185 and 703-324-2000 phone lines, which are listed in local phone directories as the main phone numbers for Fairfax County Government. In addition, the agency responds to more than 500 e-mail messages annually received through the County Web site.

### **Directory of County Information**

Maintains and updates directory of County information, which includes government activities, addresses, phone numbers, hours of operation and branch offices. This directory, which includes more than 1,400 entries, is used by multiple County agencies and will soon be made available to all County employees.

### **E-government**

Manages content of County's Web site, which includes more than 10,000 pages of information and develops, implements and monitors content policies and procedures. Provides general County information for County kiosk program and serves on program steering committee.

## *Office of Public Affairs*

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### **FOIA Meeting Schedule**

Prepares and distributes more than 260 Virginia Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) notices of meetings attended by two or more members of the Board of Supervisors to citizens annually, as mandated by Virginia Code 2.1-340 through 2.1-346, regarding publishing notices of public meetings.

### **FOIA Requests**

Coordinates responses and assists County agencies with FOIA requests from citizens, as mandated by Virginia Code 2.1-340 through 2.1-346.

### **Homeowners Association List**

Maintains list of more than 1,500 Community and Homeowner associations. This list is used by many County agencies as a primary means of communicating with citizens.

### **Marketing Programs and Services**

Recognizing the Board of Supervisors' desire to market Fairfax County, OPA is continually seeking new marketing venues. Citizen feedback from focus groups indicates that the Washington Post is the most used information resource, making it an excellent venue for County information. OPA subsequently initiated a program to place full-page advertisements in the Fairfax Extra section of the Washington Post to publicize significant County programs and services, resulting in cost-effective marketing that reaches the target audience.

### **News to Use**

Seeks information about County programs and services from all County agencies. Reviews, edits and publishes the News to Use booklet that is distributed to 1,500 Homeowner and Community Associations, as well as all agency directors four times a year. Homeowner and Community Associations use the information in their newsletters that are widely distributed to their membership.

### **Publications**

Researches, updates, writes and edits publications for our agency as well as more than 30 agencies whom rely on OPA for communications assistance. Coordinates printing and internal distribution, as well as external distribution to satellite locations such as libraries, Board offices and other County and non-County facilities. Manages inventory and publication schedule for each of the following:

- Introduction to the Board of Supervisors – general introduction to the Board and its meetings
- Newcomer's Guide – information relevant to new residents of the County
- Tax Facts – general information about County taxes
- Tax Obligations of Military – tax obligations of military personnel in Fairfax County
- Boards, Authorities and Commissions – directory of Board, Authorities and Commissions
- Materials to support countywide information campaigns such as mosquito prevention, wastewater management, wise water usage, etc.

### **Tours**

Assists with scheduling and conducting County briefings and tours for local, national and international visitors.

## *Office of Public Affairs*

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### **Town meetings/Celebrate Fairfax**

Recognizing the efficiency of using existing gatherings to provide information and the value of meeting citizens face-to-face, in FY 2001, OPA initiated participation in town meetings and Celebrate Fairfax to bring County information directly to citizens. OPA designed a new display which showcases the County's many assets for use at public gatherings.

### **Weekly Agenda**

Researches, writes, oversees printing and distributes in hard copy and electronic format approximately 45 issues of the Weekly Agenda annually. The Agenda is sent to community associations, elected officials and libraries for dissemination and is provided directly to citizens upon request. Promotes and manages the free subscription program; coordinates printing and mailing to subscribers; evaluates, executes and administers printing and mailing contract.

### **► Method of Service Provision**

Service provided directly by County employees and student interns.

Hours of Operation: 8:00 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. Monday through Friday; evening and weekend hours as necessary.

### **► Performance/Workload Related Data**

As the County's population continues to grow, so does the need for timely and accurate public information. The number of inquiries responded to by phone, e-mail and direct contacts continues to grow annually. For example, OPA responded to more than 500 e-mail inquiries in FY 2001, which represents a 45 percent increase over the previous year. In addition, OPA staff provided customer service to more than 800 constituents daily, either in person or by phone. OPA also marketed the redesigned Web site and expanded the 324-INFO system to better serve citizens through the use of these technologies.

In addition to the direct customer service provided by OPA, the agency continues to develop informational materials and seeks innovative ways to provide them to citizens and businesses. For example, one publication, News to Use, is printed and provided to more than 1,500 Homeowner and Community Associations. To enhance accessibility, the same information is made available electronically on the County's Web site and on disk. The agency also maintains an inventory of more than 100 brochures from various County agencies for distribution at the County Information Desk in the Government Center. To supplement these communication efforts, OPA staff participates in town meetings, gives presentations to citizens and visitors and solicits citizen feedback through focus groups.

### **► Mandate Information**

This CAPS is Federally or State mandated. The percentage of this CAPS' resources utilized to satisfy the mandate is 1 - 25%. The specific Federal or State code and a brief description of the code follows:

- Code of Virginia 2.1-340 through 2.1-346 - Virginia Freedom of Information Act. The Virginia Freedom of Information Act is the primary State law governing citizen access to records of public entities and to their meetings.